



Wisconsin Public Service Corp. Peshtigo River Purchase

Location: The Wisconsin Public Service Corp. (WPSC) Peshtigo River Purchase comprises approximately 70 miles of the Peshtigo River frontage and approximately 9,200 acres (not including submerged land associated with the river's flowages) in northern Marinette County. The majority of the property lies approximately 20 miles northwest of Crivitz with the Potato Rapids flowage lying approximately three miles north of Peshtigo. A section of the purchase is adjacent to Wisconsin's newly-created Tommy G. Thompson Centennial State Park.

The Peshtigo River Purchase includes Caldron Falls Flowage, a 1,180-acre reservoir; High Falls Flowage, a 1,670-acre reservoir; Johnson Falls Flowage, a 158-acre reservoir; the Fly Fishing Stretch of the Peshtigo River; and Potato Rapids Flowage, a 281-acre reservoir.

Purchase Agreement: The Department of Natural Resources (DNR) is purchasing the property from the Wisconsin Public Service Corporation (WPSC); the land is associated with the company's hydroelectric projects on the Peshtigo River. The purchase price for the property is \$25 million, which will be paid for over three years from Wisconsin's Knowles-Nelson Stewardship Fund.

Natural Features: The upper reaches of the Peshtigo River Purchase lands are characterized by two flowages, Caldron Falls and High Falls. These flowages support a good fishery for muskellunge, walleye, bass and panfish. Their forested shorelines feature numerous scenic rock outcrops and islands. The Johnson Falls Flowage lies downstream from High Falls Flowage and exhibits a narrower river channel, steeply wooded banks and an excellent fishery. The Fly Fishing Stretch of the Peshtigo River downstream from Johnson Falls offers some of the most scenic fishing for trout in the Midwest. Potato Rapids Flowage near Peshtigo is a scenic flowage with an associated marshland habitat that also supports a warmwater fishery. The land is mostly scenic, forested upland with a healthy, diverse wildlife population that includes eagles, osprey, deer and bear.

Management Plans: WPSC project lands have historically been open to public recreation under the company's hydroelectric project. The DNR will continue to promote public recreation on these properties and protect natural features. A specific management plan for the properties will be developed through the master plan process. Public input into the management of these lands will be key to the plan's development. The master plan will be based on an integrated approach to management that will include sustainable forestry, wildlife, fish and non-game management as well as the development of recreational activities such as hunting, snowmobiling, hiking, and cross country skiing -- activities currently taking place on these lands. The DNR anticipates continuing current leases on the property with Marinette County for operation of Twin Bridge County Park and with the Town of Stephenson for the town park on Boat Landing Three Road. The boat landings WPSC currently operates on the flowages will remain open for public access.